The graduate program in Painting + Printmaking is a national leader in studio research, with a commitment to a progressive and expansive approach to painting, printmaking, drawing, and digital media. Our students and faculty critically and supportively participate in individual and group critiques, seminars, presentations and exhibitions.
The graduate program in Painting + Printmaking is a site of diverse artistic pursuits. Painting and printmaking in all imaginable forms are created in our graduate studios, among them conceptual and parameters-based projects, deliberately de-skilled abstractions, narrative works, and paintings as objects and interventions. Additionally, as an emphasis is placed on working from concept to form, it is quite common for our students to further augment their practices to include other disciplines, such as installation, video, and performance. The program is highly selective, and we strive to enroll emerging artists whose work shows evidence of a unique point of view. In the process of recruiting and supporting the most promising MFA candidates, all applicants are automatically considered for teaching assistantships and other funding opportunities.

FACTORIES AND VISITING ARTISTS
The full-time faculty in Painting + Printmaking is comprised of ten accomplished professional artists whose practices represent a variety of approaches to art-making. In the interest of continually bringing new perspectives to the program, each semester an established visiting curator, critic, or artist is invited to work with MFA students in the Graduate Seminar and in one-on-one studio tutorials. In addition to the seminar faculty, the Department hosts an average of eight visiting artists each year. Visitors present public lectures and conduct individual studio visits with all Painting + Printmaking graduate students.

FACTORIES
Facilities are one of the hallmarks of the graduate program in Painting + Printmaking. All of our students work in private, individual studios located on the 3rd floor of the Fine Arts Building. Each studio is approximately 350 square feet, has permanent walls that span floor-to-ceiling, and has a locking door; all of the studios have natural lighting and ceilings 12 feet or higher. Print studios cover intaglio, lithography, screenprinting, and digital media, and the Center for Digital Printmaking, founded in 2005, fosters terrific opportunity for added dialogue and exchange regarding emerging media.

CURRICULUM
The Master of Fine Arts requires the completion of 60 credits at the graduate level. The program in Painting + Printmaking is designed to strike a balance between committed studio work and thoughtful engagement with the theories, concepts, and innovations that inform contemporary art. In addition, there is flexibility to pursue academic electives that relate to individual research. In studio courses, graduate students work on self-directed projects, meeting frequently with faculty and visitors; the ensuing conversations generate insights, present challenges, and assist students in refining their conceptual and formal goals. In the first year of graduate work, studio practice is complemented by the study of art history and theory (two semesters) and contemporary art (one semester), as well as the Graduate Seminar. The end of the first year of study is marked by a candidacy exhibition and faculty review. In the second year, students enroll in Graduate Painting or Printmaking, Graduate Seminar, studio electives and a professional practices course that prepares them for the rigors of maintaining their careers after graduation. The pursuit of the MFA culminates in an exhibition at VCU’s Anderson Gallery and the completion of a written thesis.

ALUMNI
One of the best measures of the success of our program is the long list of achievements by recent graduates. In the past few years, Painting + Printmaking alumni have presented work in solo and group exhibitions in New York, Los Angeles, and internationally; attended prestigious art residency programs; written art criticism and poetry for publication; given artist lectures; curated exhibitions; and founded their own exhibition venues. The vitality of the MFA program as a community is also demonstrated by the strong connections that our students maintain with our faculty and with each other. In art centers around the U.S., a growing network of accomplished alumni engage in dialogue, work on collaborative projects, and actively support one another in their many creative endeavors.

Each of our fifteen graduate students engages in two years of full-time course work and intensive studio practice with the ultimate aim of sustaining a meaningful practice as a professional artist.